

Dear Servers and Parents,

We are sending you a copy of the servers' handbook and ask that all servers read it and be familiar with it before attending one of the workshops that will be coming up soon.

I have included a schedule of workshops in this letter. Although it is difficult, I have listed five different workshops to be able to accommodate everyone's schedule.

The schedule of workshops is as follows:

Sunday October 21.....5:00 - 6:00PM

Tuesday October 23.....6:00 - 7:30PM

Wednesday October 24.....6:00 - 7:30PM NEW SERVERS TRAINING

Wednesday November 76:00 - 7:30PM

Tuesday November 13.....6:00 - 7:30PM

All workshops are in the Church unless otherwise notified. All servers must attend one of the workshops. The training on the 24th of October is for new servers and will review everything for serving, the other workshops will assume experience. If you cannot attend any other workshops, experienced servers may attend the 24th but must understand that it will be more detailed. At least one parent must accompany servers who are seventh grade or lower. Parents of older servers are, of course, more than welcome and encouraged to attend.

We have refined the handbook to incorporate some things that should be part of the altar service ministry. Some questions may be raised as to "why we are adding new things." But you should be aware that these are not "new" but rather rubrics and requirements that have always been requisite. Serving at the altar achieves two objectives; first it provides assistance that is needed to help the mass proceed smoothly; secondly it instills a reverence and respect for the greatest prayer of our faith and the reenactment of the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the future generations of Catholics. As of late, it has been noted that the reverence displayed by some of the servers has been less than ideal. This is generally due to a lack enforcement of rules and rubrics regarding attire, behavior and procedure while serving mass and a lack of regular workshops for the servers.

Some of the requirements and rubrics in the handbook may seem to be inflexible to some of you; however, we must understand that the focus of attention at mass is to be given to God. The rest of us are servants who are performing a ministry and are there for the primary purpose of making sure that the mass is a reverent and spiritual experience for the praise and glory of the Holy Trinity. It is an awesome responsibility for all; the Presider, the Deacon, **servers**, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, musicians, choir members, cantors, lectors and ushers. It is imperative that **all** who serve at the Eucharist take the responsibility very seriously and dress and act accordingly. Inappropriate actions and dress that distract the attention of the faithful are unbecoming and unacceptable at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

We are very happy that you are committing to serve the Lord at His table and it is important that all understand that this ministry requires dedication on your part as well.

We want you to be aware that we understand that you may have other activities such as sports, school events or other extra curricular activities and we know that these activities are healthy and contribute to the overall development of young men and women; however if these activities will conflict on a regular basis with your availability to serve, then, you must decide, with your parents, what is more important. The decision is not ours to make, it is yours and we respect that and pass no judgment upon you if you decide that other commitments or family situations will not allow you to serve. It is far better to recognize that and address it straightforward than to struggle. If the decision to serve is made then, it is incumbent upon you to ensure that you are present at the scheduled masses and arrives in the time frame specified in the handbook (15 minutes prior to scheduled starting time of mass). Parent, I ask your support in assisting to see that this is accomplished.

It is true that we have a strict policy; and this is necessary to ensure that we have the needed number of servers at every mass and that they are dressed in a manner that is respectful of the ministry in which they serve. So if you and your child make the decision to commit to serving at the Lord's altar, other activities must be balanced with it. In most cases, it should not be an issue, but where a child has a great number of other commitments, the situation could be stressful to all.

We also want everyone to understand that serving is not limited to weekends. We have three daily masses four days a week and two on Fridays. We have weddings, funerals, benedictions and prayer services like Stations of the Cross during Lent that require support from our server ministry. Therefore **it is expected that your child will be available** to serve at weekday masses on a rotational basis just as they will serve at weekend masses. It is also expected that they will serve funerals and other liturgies when requested as is practical. For our part, we will work hard to make sure that the schedules are balanced and equitable and will understand when emergencies arise provided we are made aware.

We firmly believe that if we all work together in a spirit of perseverance and understanding we will be able to give to God the glory and praise that he both deserves and expects.

Please complete the attached information sheet and email (or mail) it along with your choice of workshop to deacon_ron_sspp@comcast.net before **Friday October 19**.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Thomas Milota
Pastor

Deacon Ron Brown
Altar Server Director